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COMMENTS RE EPB NOTICE NO. 3-50

Consideration is being given to another of the recurrent efforts to phrase definitions applicable to ORE publications. It is submitted that this has been attempted many times in the past, without notable results except in unprintable terms.

The merits of this particular effort are as questionable as most of the previous ones. The specific arguments against it lie mainly, as usual, in that it can mean all things to all men and is, therefore, valueless as a guide to determine whether a publication should be called an estimate or a report, or whether it is "significant" enough to warrant publication.

The effort is described in EPB Notice No. 3-50 as an attempt at a "workable approach to resolving the questions of what types of reports and estimates this office should produce".

It seems curious that the assigned mission of ORE is not considered to be the obvious standard for such a determination. ORE, it is believed, is supposed to produce estimates consistent with its mission of advising higher authority of matters affecting US security, and to do so in sufficient time to permit any necessary action. Certain clearly identified sections of ORE are charged with examining intelligence, either technical or basic, of "common concern", and are ordered to conduct research as a service to estimating and research components. No great ambiguity appears here.

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The criterion for publication of an estimate would appear to be either the extent of damage done to US security or the extent to which specialized research commitments would not be met if the estimate were not made available to appropriate authority in sufficient time to permit action. What such an estimate or research paper is called is as much a matter of academic interest as is the elegance of its literary style. Timeliness, in both senses of the word, accuracy, and clarity are the only qualities which need or should be considered; whether the paper is called an estimate, a report, a study, or a saga is immaterial.

At present a committee is studiously engaged in an effort to formulate a production plan for ORE. The past several years have seen floundering and fruitless attempts to ascertain how ORE should carry out its mission. It is hoped that this committee will arrive at a solution. Pending the final report of that committee it is most strongly urged that the EPB refrain completely from concerning itself with rhetorical exercises to define intelligence trade words, and begin to concern itself with what is, perhaps, the unpleasant but nevertheless, essential task of determining whether the present ORE publications collectively, and, if necessary, individually, are consistent with the mission of ORE.

It is, therefore, recommended that the proposal to establish the ORE Reports Series be rejected as an unsatisfactory half-way measure, and that no further time or effort be expended in attempts

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to avoid hard work by indulging in over-simplification or to find a short cut to the accomplishment of ORE's mission by inventing categories of publication and disregarding their content.

The time has come for the EPB to: (a) abandon the belief that when it has said something it has done something; (b) stop appointing committees to say something; (c) start constructive criticism of ORE publications and other activities at the risk of injured feelings; and (d) go to work.